

# Rescue Me

by Greydon Creed

Category: Buffy: The Vampire Slayer

Genre: Adventure

Language: English

Characters: Buffy S., Xander H.

Status: Completed

Published: 2000-05-04 09:00:00

Updated: 2001-04-14 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 17:06:44

Rating: T

Chapters: 6

Words: 19,082

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Buffy has been kidnapped by vampires. Xander is the only witness and it's up to him to rescue the Slayer. Winner of the Best Action Fic Award from the BXFanFic List. Nominated for Best Friendship Fic by the White Knight Awards.

## 1. RM 1

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Title: Rescue Me

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Summary: Buffy has been kidnapped by vampires. Xander is the only witness and it's up to him to rescue the Slayer.

Spoiler Warning: This story takes place after Killed By Death. The story goes off on a different story line tangent ( among other things, Jenny Calendar did not die in Passion ) and after reading it, you will see why.

Rating: PG-13, for violence and suggestive language.

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Distribution: Please let me know first; and I will be glad to let you archive it.

Feedback: Please; this was my first full length story.

Notes: *\_Italics\_* denote internal thoughts/conversations. First

published on Fanfiction.net May 4, 2000.

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rescue me - chapter one

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Sunnydale High School,

Friday, 3:10 PM

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As I walked into the library after school, I expected to see only Giles there. Except for the times he was at home or actually helping Buffy slay the newest threat to the continued existence of humanity, the G-man was happiest doing his unending research or cross-referencing.

What I did see when I walked in was Buffy, sitting in a chair with her boots propped up on the big table. She was wearing her standard spaghetti-strapped blouse, her short skirt was about halfway up her thighs and it was all I could do to not let the drool hit the floor. Swallowing the lump in my throat, I called out to her, "Hey Buffy, what are you doing here?"

Buffy looked up from the magazine she had been reading with a start. "Hey Xander. I was just trying to figure out what dress I was going to buy for that big party the Bronze is having next week. I want to dress nice for the occasion." While Buffy was talking, she took her boots off the table and stood up, her skirt now falling to just above the knee. "I was going to go to the mall with Willow but she had to go out of town with her folks for the weekend. What about you, why are you still here at school?"

"I got a book report assigned for this weekend and I was hoping that Giles could suggest a good book for me to read." I tossed my book bag on the table and leaned up against it.

Buffy grinned at my response. "By good book you mean short and simple, right?" I nodded sheepishly. "Well, you're out of luck because Giles just left to go out of town with Ms. Calendar."

"You're telling me that the stuffy, duty-first librarian and Watcher we all know and love just left town to spend time with an attractive woman? I'm shocked, I'm astounded, I'mâ€¦" I put my hands up to my face in pretend horror.

Buffy laughed out loud. "No, silly. Giles is going to the Bay Area for an antique book sale that's happening there. When he told Ms. Calendar that he was going to the sale, she invited herself along for the trip. I don't think that Giles was all that upset that Jenny went, though."

I shook my head in sorrow. "Well, I guess that I'll have to plan B. The fall back plan of every student faced with a book report when they have better things to doâ€¦the secret weapon of high school students everywhereâ€¦Cliff Notes."

"Xander! Are you telling me you're going to fake your way through a book report with Cliff Notes?" Buffy was looking at me with both surprise and disapproval on her face.

"You make that sound so dishonest," I said defensively. Buffy glared at me. "As a matter of fact the teacher told us we have to give specific instances from the book, so the Cliff Notes alone wouldn't be enough. I'll read the Cliff Notes and go through the book for the instances. That way I can do the report sounding like I know what I'm talking about and still finish faster than by just reading the book."

Buffy looked satisfied by my explanation. "So, do you already have the book picked out?"

"Yeahâ€¦I was just hoping that Giles could get me a simpler book. 'The Lord of the Flies' is not my cup of tea," I said with a grin on my face. "Now all I have to do is go to the book store at the mall and pick up the Cliff Notes version."

"How are you getting to the mall? Taking the bus again?" Buffy had a small smile on her face. She knew how much I hated taking the bus anywhere.

"No, actually my mom let me use her station wagon this weekend. All I have to do is walk home and pick it up." I started dancing my infamous Xander-Dance there in the middle of the library.

"Perfect. I need a ride to the mall to get my dress and my mom is out of town again on an art-buying trip. So, Xander, will you give me a lift?" Buffy struck a mock hitchhiking pose, right thumb up in the air, left leg out in front of her seductively, causing her skirt to start riding up her thigh again.

The lump in my throat came back again. "Sure, Buffy. On one condition."

Buffy looked at me curiously. "And what would that be?"

I grinned. "Could you hold that pose for a minute so that I could burn it into my memory?"

Buffy playfully gave me a shove, knocking me back against the table. "Pick me up in an hour at my house. And you already have enough images of me burned into your mind."

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Sunnydale Mall

Friday, 8:30 PM

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While shopping with females was not high on my list of fun things to do, Buffy was the happy exception to that rule. Normally, watching women paw through dozens of racks in search of the perfect dress would cause me to go nuts with boredom. However, watching Buffy try on short dress after tight dress after low-cut dress was the perfect

antidote to that boredom.

Buffy and I were walking through the mall with Buffy holding two full bags while I carried my small book store bag containing the Cliff Notes. I had been trying to read the booklet in the intermissions of the All-Buffy Fashion Show, but I had discovered that it's hard to retain information when a beautiful girl is modeling dresses for you.

"I still can't believe that you bought all that, Buffy. You came here to buy one dress and it looks like you bought out the store." I tried to take one of Buffy's bags but she held the bags out of my reach.

"No, thank you, I can carry my own bags. And I did not buy out the store. I bought two dresses and all the necessary accessories for them. You're lucky that I already have the shoes for these or we would still be at it." Buffy grinned at me.

"Well, I wouldn't have minded staying longer if you had let me go in with you when we went to Victoria's Secret. " Buffy, to my ever-undying regret, made me wait outside the store while she was inside.

"Well, all I got there is some skin care stuff, so you didn't miss much." Buffy smiled mischievously. "Besides, if you had gone in there, your imagination would have overloaded and you'd pass out."

"Sometimes that's a good thing." I noticed that we were outside the mall video game arcade. "Hey, here's something that I've haven't done for a while."

Buffy gave me an incredulous look. "You still play video games, Xander? You're a high school junior, for crying out loud."

I looked insulted. "I'll have you know that I do not just 'play video games'. I am engaging in simulated combat against relevant adversaries."

Buffy looked at me with a thin smile. "Either you have been hanging around Giles too much or that is the biggest load of BS I've heard in a long time."

I smiled back at her. "Let me show you what I'm talking about," I said as we walked into the arcade. "I'm not playing 'Mortal Kombat' here. If I want to see that all I have to do is go on patrol with you."

We walked up on past all the blinking and beeping machines toward the back wall, where the two games that I had gotten good at playing were. Buffy took one look at the names on the machines and started laughing.

"Xander, you're telling me you're play a game called 'The House of the Dead?'"

I faked looking hurt. "Well, after all that we've done, I want a situation where I can fight monsters by shooting them and not by getting picked up and thrown against a wall and knocked out. And

'Time Crisis II' teaches you about ducking for coverâ€¦ another concept I have trouble with."

"How good are you at these games, Xand?" Buffy put her bags down and was looking curiously at the games.

"I can usually place in the top five. I think it's my soldierly instincts from that Halloween deal." I breathed on my fingernails and polished them on my Hawaiian shirt, trying not to look too arrogant.

"Sure, Xander. The fact that you believed that you were a soldier on Halloween is what lets you kill so many of these fake monsters. If that was the case, I would still be acting like a idiot, begging for a man to protect me." Buffy looked at me with an amused look on her face.

"OK, I spend a bit of money doing this. But I am pretty good at it." I looked at the machine and got an idea. "How about if we play a game together?"

"What? I spend all of my spare time fighting real monsters and you want me to pay for the privilege of doing the same with pretend monsters? No, thanks." Buffy started picking up her bags again.

"It'll be fun, Buffy. We can see if your Slayer reflexes and instincts can transfer onto the small screen. I'll even pay for you." I looked at her entreatingly.

"Wellâ€¦OK. But you have to show me how to do this." Buffy looked back at the machines again.

"I think that we can skip 'The House of the Dead'. 'Time Crisis II' is much better anyway." I placed Buffy's bags by the machine and went and got tokens from the change machine.

After showing Buffy how the 'gun' and the 'duck/reload' pedal worked, I stepped in front of my station and inserted the necessary tokens in the coin slots. When the game story prologue started, outlining how the two secret agents/players had to go in and stop a nuclear weapons satellite from being launched into space and rescue a captured female agent, Buffy laughed.

"Don't all these games start this way? There is a girl in trouble somewhere and you have to go in blasting to save her?" Buffy was laughing, but holding her 'gun' at the ready.

"Yeah, they do. But it's still fun." I held my 'gun' at the ready as well. "One more thing, Buffy."

"What's that, Xand?" The prologue was almost over.

"In this game it's possible to shoot your partner. Please don't."

"I don't think that is going to be a problem, Xander." And the game started in earnest.

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I had a feeling from the beginning that Buffy was going to be better at the game than I was. I had not been kidding about her Slayer reflexes and instincts. Buffy had once showed off how fast she was by snatching flies out of the air without hurting them. What I had wanted to know was how good I was against her in this artificial world where the worst that could happen was that you had to put more tokens in the game to keep playing.

Buffy got the hang of the game before we finished the first stage. She was shooting the bad guys on the game at near machine gun speed. It took me a minute to realize that, while I fired single shots at each bad guy and knocking them down quickly, Buffy was firing two fast shots at each bad guy and knocking them down at warp speed. As soon as her 'gun' came up dry, she would duck and reload in about half a second. And no, Buffy did not shoot me.

At the end of each stage, the game would show each player's point total and hit percentage. Because of my single shot hits my hit percentage would normally be about 70%. Buffy's point total was just a little higher than mine because of the "double-taps", but her hit percentage was about 88%. In other words, Buffy shot faster and more accurately than me but didn't get many more bad guys than I did.

Another thing that Buffy did better than me was to not get shot as much. When I finally lost all my lives, I dug out some more tokens to get back in the game. I watched Buffy for a minute while putting the tokens in the machine. She was standing there holding the 'gun' in both hands, leaning forward and firing. There was a look of intense concentration on her face, and because of the stress and speed of the game, she was perspiring. Not the gym class type of sweat; the light, sexy, kind of perspiring on her face and shoulders under her spaghetti strap blouse that made you want to

"Xander! Are you going to get back in or not?" Buffy growled in a intent tone of voice. Buffy was still concentrating on the game when she spoke, so she didn't see me ogling her. I quickly shook it off and shot the start button on the screen, getting back in the game.

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Sunnydale Mall

Friday, 8:55 PM

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We finally got to the end of the game, where we faced off with General Diaz and his nuclear weapons satellite. Shocking no one, the Slayer and her able gun fighting assistant (me) were able to stop the satellite launch and General Diaz's plan. We also rescued the captured female agent as well. When the final scores came up, Buffy and I had ranked number one.

"You were right, Xander. You do 'engage in simulated combat with relevant adversaries,'" Buffy said with a smile on her face, repeating what I had said earlier.

"All right, so it isn't vampires. But you do have a lot of fun. If you want to go up against zombies, we could play 'The House Of The

Dead' over there," I replied, working the kinks from my neck.

"No, thank you. I've had enough fun tonight. The mall is about to close anyway." Buffy picked up her bags and we walked toward the door. "Tell me, why haven't we had fun like this lately?"

"Between the attentions of your ex-boyfriend and the demands of school and slaying, I guess you haven't had a lot of time to have fun," I replied, swinging the outside mall door open and letting Buffy out into the nearly empty parking lot first. "Besides, after that love spell, I had the feeling you were still embarrassed about what had happened in the library."

"Ugghh. Thanks for reminding me about Angel. And no, I am not still embarrassed about what happened in the library. I am so totally over that." Buffy continued walking, but I swear I saw a faint blush on her cheeks. "What about things between you and Cordelia?"

"It not too bad between me and Cordy now that we are out of the closetâ€¦|literally speaking I mean," I said, throwing a quick glance at Buffy, who smiled thinly. "She's in Palm Springs this weekend with her parents. You know, now that Cordy and me are together, I guess that means that the epic romance between you and me will never come to be." I held my hand to my heart and pretended to sniffle.

Buffy laughed out loud at my antics. "Speaking of you and me, you did pretty good at that game back there. You were keeping up with me and I know that's not an easy game.

"I'm just waiting for the day that we do have it like that. All that hand-to-hand with vampires gets old pretty quick. And it does feel good when you rescue the girl at the end. The day comes that I have to shoot my way into a place to get you out of a jam, I'll be set," I said in a mock serious tone of voice.

"I'll tell you what. The day that I get deep into trouble and you have to blast your way in and bail me out, not only will I let you rescue me, I'll even give you a kiss to thank you," Buffy said with another thin smile on her face.

I did a pretend double take. "You mean that I have something to look forward to? Oh, happy day, happy day! I have something to look forward to!" I started to dance my Xander-Dance again.

Buffy laughed again. "Knock it off, Xander. We're almost at your car."

I stopped dancing and reached in my pocket for the car keys. Suddenly, Buffy stopped, put her bags on the ground and started to look around warily. I've seen that look on Buffy's face before and her next words confirmed the reason why.

"Xanderâ€¦| we've got company," Buffy grabbed her handbag and opened it. She left her hand in the bag while still looking around.

"Where are they? There's no one around, the parking lot is almost empty, and there is no one in the car." I gestured toward my mom's station wagon.

I was standing next to the car when a pair of inhumanly strong hands

reached out from under the car, grabbed my ankles and yanked hard. The last thing I saw before everything turned black was the parking lot pavement rushing toward my face.

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end rescue me chapter one

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2. RM 2

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rescue me chapter two

Sunnydale General Hospital

Friday, 10:55 PM

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There was this hideously strong searchlight trying to light me up. I tried running from it but kept tracking me until it finally hit me square in the face. The pain in my eyes caused me to try to close them but something forced them open. I was going to try knocking it away with my arm when I heard a voice speaking above me.

"The patient's pupils are equal and reactive. I think it's safe to say that he doesn't have a major concussion but we're going to give him a CAT scan once the tech comes in and keep him for the night for observation. He should be regaining consciousness at anytime now, Detective."

CAT scan. Concussion. I must be in the hospital. The last thing I remember was that someone had grabbed me and knocked me headfirst into the parking lot while Buffy was looking around for vampires. The voices above continued to talk.

"We need to talk to this kid to know what happened. The only things we know is that this kid was found knocked out next to a couple of spilled store bags of clothes and his name weren't on the receipts. It's possible that the girl whose handbag we also found there had been kidnapped. This kid is lucky that the mall security truck found him or he might have bled to death from his head injury."

"You're right about the bleeding. We had to give him three units of blood before he stabilized. The X-rays show no skull fractures, so he'll recover with nothing more serious than a major headache and some disorientation. His parents were notified, I assume?"

From the way the two voices were talking, I figured that it was a doctor and a police detective that were talking above me. I was keeping my eyes shut to see if they would keep talking - I knew the cop probably would not tell me much more I've already heard.

"This kid's parents are on their way in. The problem is that no one can contact the girl's mother. The uniforms that went to her house said the neighbors told them that the mother was out of town."



No kidding, dummy. Buffy's mom was on an art-buying trip. My head was starting to pound like the bass drum in the high school marching band. I heard the two start to walk away while still talking.

"Here's my card, doctor. Could you contact us when he wakes up so that he can talk to him? Unless we get more info this case is going to go down as one of the weird ones. I mean, we found another blood splatter at the crime scene and three dust piles around this kid's car. What the hell does that mean?"

Dust piles. Blood. Buffy must have staked at least three vamps before she got hurt - the second blood sample was certainly hers. That meant that the vamps had taken Buffy alive - if they had killed her, they wouldn't have dragged her off. They probably got scared off by the mall security truck and taken her with them.

My head had started to hurt once I woke up, and all this thinking was not helping. But all a sudden the little voice in my head started to talk to me, and it was not like before.

I know what you're thinking. And you're right. Little voices in Xander's head are not a good sign - especially after a head injury. But everyone had their little voice in their head - we covered this in the psychology section of health sciences. According to one theory, (and this is really watered down), everyone has their good side and their bad side and the part of your mind that makes decisions is a referee of the two. So when you are debating in your mind to do something or not, it's really the two sides trying to convince your mind to do something.

More times than not, it was my good side talking to me, trying to convince me not to do something dumb or dangerous. But in this case, it was my dark side that was doing the talking. The last time Dark Xander (as I called that little voice) was in control was when the hyena had possessed me. But this time Dark Xander was not urging me to harm people - he was starting to make sense.

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\_'You know that the police aren't going to be able to do anything - like they ever do. The vamps have Buffy and she'll be dead before the cops get it together,'\_ Dark Xander whispered in my mind. \_'We have to do something about this.'\_

\_'What do you mean we? Everyone is out of town for the weekend. We can't just go charging in by ourselves to save Buffy. For all we know, Angelus has her,'\_ I replied in my mind.

—

\_'You've stood up to Angelus before, you know. In this hospital, as a matter of fact. But it doesn't matter. If we wait until everyone gets back before we do something, the only thing we'll be able to do for Buffy is bury her - if she's lucky.'\_ Dark Xander was not pulling any punches.

—

\_ 'OK then. But we're still here in the hospital. I don't think that I'm in the shape for this,'\_ I thought to myself.

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\_ 'It doesn't matter. We have to go. Now look around and see what's in this room that would be useful,'\_ Dark Xander ordered me.

I sat up and winced from the pain in my head. I was in a curtained-off area that was pretty quiet - that meant I had some privacy. I saw a plastic bag hanging off the foot of the hospital bed. I reached over and grabbed it. Luckily, it contained my clothes. I pulled them out and saw that the shirt was blood-soaked. No good. I didn't want to call attention to myself. The jacket was dark, so that didn't show much blood and the jeans were OK.

I saw that I was hooked up to an IV line and a vital signs monitor. Carefully I turned off the monitor off, and when no one came running, I knew that no alarms had gone off. I unhooked myself from the IV and the monitor and got dressed. I left the hospital gown on and tucked in as a shirt - it would pass until I got better clothes. I pulled on my shoes and slowly stood up. My head was still pounding but I was functional. Peering through the curtain, I saw that there was no one in this section of the ER. I walked through the curtain and into a nearby restroom - I had see what had happened to me. Turning on the light, I squinted for a second until my eyes had gotten used to the brightness. I saw the reflection in the mirror and almost didn't recognize myself.

I had a bandage wrapped around a pad on my forehead. Peeking under the pad, I saw stitches. Luckily, they were by my hairline so if there was a scar, it wouldn't show. I also had what looked like the beginning of a black eye on the right side of my face. I knew that a cold pack would keep it from getting too bad. No vampire teeth marks on my neck - always a good sign. Other than that, I didn't look too bad. As a matter of fact, my eyes had gone deeper in their sockets, giving them a cold look.

I snuck a look out into the ER from the restroom. I could see that it was kind of busy - Friday night in Sunnydale was like that. So I just walked out the door into the hall and no one looked at me twice. I got to the end of the hall and ducked through a door andâ€| presto... I was outside.

Just as I was turning the corner, I saw my mom pull up in her car and walk up to the emergency room door. I wanted to let her know I was OK, but I had places to go and people to see.

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\_ 'OK, we're out of the hospital. What next?'\_ I whispered to myself.

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\_ 'We need to know what happened to Buffy, but the priority is to get your gear together. That and a new shirt.'\_ Dark Xander replied in my head.

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\_ 'What gear?'\_ I thought to myself.

—

\_ 'Unless you want to take the vamps on with your bare hands, you need gear. And I think you know where I'm talking about,'\_ Dark Xander said.

—

\_ 'Oh, yeah. It's time to visit Uncle Tim's house.'\_ I thought to myself, cracking my knuckles.

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Timothy Harris' House,

Sunnydale

Friday, 11:30 PM

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My Uncle Tim was a fun guy who fit in with the people of Sunnydale. In other words, he was a bit of an oddball. Uncle Tim owned a local hardware store and made a good living for himself. It was his hobbies that made him a bit odd.

Uncle Tim had served in the U.S. Army as a Ranger master sergeant and had been in the Persian Gulf War. After getting out of the regular Army, he became a reservist and still went on deployments outside the country. Besides that, Uncle Tim was a gun collector, and that would prove useful tonight.

I knew that Uncle Tim had gone on one of his deployments and would not be home for another week. And I also knew the security codes that would let me enter his house and open his safe. The codes to the safe I had found by accident one day while I was going through some of Uncle Tim's books on his bookcase.

The house was not that far from Sunnydale General Hospital, so I jogged from there to the house in about ten minutes. I went around the back of the house and accessed the alarm system. A few keystrokes later I was in.

First of all I went to the refrigerator and grabbed a couple of Cokes. I slammed them down fast - I was parched. I guess the blood I lost earlier was to blame. I made up an icepack and put it against my face.

Next stop was the bathroom. There I took off my clothes and washed up. I did not want to go hunting with blood on me - the vampires would smell it. I went into my uncle's closet and borrowed some clothes. Lucky for me, my uncle and I were roughly the same sizes and everything worked out.

In honor of the occasion, I was wearing all dark clothes. The long-sleeve dark blue shirt and the black jeans would help me move unseen in the dark, and the combat boots added a nice touch. But it

was time to do what I came here for.

I walked into the spare bedroom and went up to what looked like a regular door. I had retrieved the code card from the bookshelf earlier and when I swung the door open, the full-length safe door was visible behind it. I punched in the proper codes and the arms locker opened.

Uncle Tim had received his firearms training in the service, and his collection was a reflection of it. Most of his collection was items that he had used in the Army. That meant that all my Halloween memories/experience would be useful.

I had decided to come to Uncle Tim's house instead of the military base because the increased security at the base. For some reason, the Army gets upset when kids break into the armory, steal a rocket launcher, and use it to blow up an ancient demon in the middle of a crowded shopping mall.

I selected a couple of Beretta 9mm pistols and five extra magazines with ammo for each and put them in a duffel bag that my uncle had been kind enough to leave in his arms locker. Gun belts, holsters and ammo pouches also went into the bag. After further reflection, I grabbed a Kevlar vest and some other goodies and put those in a second bag. Last of all, I pulled out a Mossberg riot shotgun and shells and put them in the first bag. I placed the bags on the bedroom floor and closed the arms locker.

I carried the two bags down to the garage and put them in the trunk of Uncle Tim's dark blue Chevy Caprice, the keys to which I had snagged from the pegboard in the kitchen. Before I closed the trunk, I pulled a Beretta pistol and magazine from one of the bags. After loading the pistol and chambering the first round, I applied the safety and shoved the pistol into my waistband cross draw in front of my left hip.

I went into the house to see if anything was amiss before I left and saw a long black fabric duster coat hanging from a hook by the front door. It looked like it would be useful, so I put it on. Moving back toward the garage I caught a glance of myself in the mirror in the hallway and did a double take.

The figure in the mirror had a bandage on his head, a pistol in his waistband and a cold look on his face. With my hair ruffled and the dark clothes and long black coat, I looked just like I did when the hyena spirit had possessed me. I smiled at the reflection in the mirror.

—

\_'You think that you can do it now,'\_ Dark Xander whispered in my mind. \_'You think you can take the vamps on?'\_

— —

\_'Yeah. I know I can,' \_ I whispered to myself.

After I drove the car out of the garage, I closed everything up and armed the alarm. I was going to make a quick trip to Buffy's place for some vampire hunter supplies. After that, I was going to have a

"talk" with some vampires.

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Sunnydale Park

Saturday, 1:30AM

\*\*

I was rethinking my plan. The idea to cruise the parks and the Bronze for a friendly "talk" with a vampire turned out to be a bust. God knows I ran across enough couples making out at both places to make a vampire drool in anticipation, but no luck. This was starting to give me a bad feeling. Anytime a vampire stayed in on a night like this meant that there was something big was going on.

I sat in Uncle Tim's car at the edge of the park, thinking hard. The headache from the earlier festivities had settled to a dull throb, but it wasn't helping my thoughts any. I finally started talking to myself, trying to jumpstart my thinking.

—

\_'The vamps aren't in their old hideout' Buffy had checked that out a few times after they tried to bring back the Master and it stayed empty. That means they found a new place'right?' \_ I wondered to myself.

—

\_'Brilliant thinking, Sherlock. It only took you a whole minute to figure that out.' \_ Dark Xander was being his usual sarcastic self.

—

\_'I knew that from the beginning,' \_ I thought defensively. \_'That's why I was looking for a vamp to "talk" to' to find out where the new hideout is.' \_

--

\_'Yeah, but as usual, the vamps aren't cooperating. And the time to talk to a vamp is running out,' \_Dark Xander reminded me.

I sat there for a minute, trying to think of where the vampires might be hiding. But Sunnydale, while not a big town, had more than its share of abandoned buildings, and I didn't have time to search all of them. For a second, my mind slipped out of gear and that's when the realization hit me.

—

\_'I don't have to talk to the vamps to find out what's going on. I just have to talk to someone who deals with them,' \_ I whispered to myself.

—

\_ 'Very good, grasshopper. Continue this line of thought.' \_ Dark Xander replied, mimicking the master's voice from the old 'Kung Fu' show.

—

\_ 'I assumed that we're the only ones dealing with vampires in Sunnydale because we're the ones that are fighting them all the time. But there's other people besides Buffy and the Slayerettes that do business with vampires all the time.' \_ My idea was starting to crystallize.

—

\_ 'Go on, keep it coming,' \_ Dark Xander whispered in my mind.

—

\_ 'Back when the Order of Taraka was after Buffy, both Angel and Buffy went to— that's it!' \_ I thought in surprise. \_ 'Willow had said that Buffy had gone to a sleazy bar owner who knew about vampires to get information from him after Angel had gone bad. Now what was this guy's name?' \_ I frowned in concentration.

—

\_ 'Don't screw up, kid. You almost got it.' \_ Dark Xander sounded excited.

—

\_ 'Willy! Willy the snitch! And I know what bar he owns!' \_ I turned on the car and dropped it into gear.

—

\_ 'And what, pray tell, are you going say when you walk into that bar? I don't think this guy will want to talk to some kid off the street,' \_ Dark Xander asked as I pulled away from the curb.

—

\_ 'I'll just tell him I'm a friend of Buffy's,' \_ I replied as I drove down the street. \_ 'I'm sure he'll be happy to talk to me then.' \_

— —

end rescue me chapter two

### 3. RM 3

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rescue me chapter three

The Alibi Room,

Sunnydale,

Saturday, 2:00 AM

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As I walked into the bar, I could see that it was empty except for a short guy behind the counter. He was wiping down the bar when he saw me enter.

"The bar's closed, pal. Unless you want something beside liquor, I have to lock up." The short guy looked at me oddly, like he was trying to remember who I was.

I recognized the short guy as Willy. I had caught a glimpse of him during the fight at the old church when we went to rescue Angel from Spike and Drusilla. But it was apparent that Willy didn't know who I was.

Another thought struck me. Willy didn't think that I was a high school kid or he would have called me on it. Dressed the way that I was, he probably thought that I was a vampire. Time to check that theory.

"I just got into town, and I know that some of my friends come in here to get something to drink," I said, stressing the last part. "I was hoping that maybe you could help me find them."

"What time of day do your friends usually come in?" Willy was looking intently at my face. Good thing I had removed the bandage and recombined my hair to cover the stitches.

"They're more night people than anything. You never see them out in the sunlight." I was keeping my face neutral, but slowly moving toward the bar.

"I don't think I know who you're talking about," Willy said nervously. His right hand had dropped behind the bar. This was not a good sign - I did not know what he was reaching for. It was time to lay my cards on the table and see what happened.

"I was looking for one person in particular - you probably know her. Her name is Buffy Summers."

If I was waiting for a reaction, this was surely it. Willy's face turned dead pale and he turned and ran for the back door. Fortunately, I figured that this was going to be his response and had angled myself to intercept him. I grabbed him before he cleared the door and threw him up against the wall.

"Willy, Willy, Willy - don't you know it's rude to leave in the middle of a conversation?" I was trying to hold Willy up against the wall, but he kept wiggling like a landed fish. Finally, I slugged him full in the stomach and he dropped to the floor, gasping for air.

I needed to talk to Willy without interruption, so I pulled out a flattened roll of duct tape I had snagged at my uncle's place and wrapped some around Willy's wrists while his hands were behind his back. Leaving him on the floor for a minute, I went to the front door and locked it and flipped off the outside light. I didn't want for someone to walk into our conversation, and it *was* closing

time.

Walking behind the bar, I took a look at what Willy had been reaching for. A large wooden cross was sitting on a shelf next to a stake and a baseball bat. Shaking my head, I returned to Willy and dragged him to his feet. I pulled him to a table and sat him down in a chair. Pulling up another chair, I sat on it a short distance in front of him.

"Willy, we need to talk. You know things and time is running out. How badly this goes depends on how well you cooperate," I said in a quiet tone of voice. I could see how scared Willy was and was trying not to make things worse.

"I don't know anything! I just work here in the bar and serve drinks! I don't know what to tell you!" Willy was sweating heavily, and his eyes were bouncing all over the place.

"I know that you set Buffy up with the Order of Taraka. I know that you gave Angel over to Spike and Drusilla. And I know that you deal with vampires all the time. Now, you sure you don't know anything?" I was looking steadily at Willy, which seemed to make him more nervous.

"So I sell a little pig's blood on the side. That doesn't mean that I'm out to hurt people. Buffy and the Order of Taraka was a misunderstanding - she's even forgiven me." Willy was starting to calm down while he was talking.

"She's forgiven you all right. That's why she beats you up whenever you guys talk." I snorted. "But this isn't about that. You must hear lots of interesting thing her at the bar when you sell your pig's blood. Now tell me about tonight's attack on Buffy and me at the mall."

"You're the other kid? They said that you were dead! Howâ€¦!" Willy's voice trailed off when he saw the look on my face.

"You know a lot more than you say. I'm not dead, and Buffy is being held by vamps. You know what's happening and I'm starting to get ticked off." I stood up and walked up to Willy, standing to the side of him in case he tried to get frisky.

"Buffy is still alive and the vamps have her. You *will* tell me where she is, or I will start breaking bones starting from your left little toe to your right little finger." To let him know that I was serious, I yanked the chair out from under him and dumped him on the floor.

Willy was looking terrified by now. "If I tell you anything, the vamps will come and kill me. Spike's mad enough at me already."

"Spike? Spike has her, not Angelus? I thought he was killed in the old church." I sat on my chair again, leaving Willy on the floor.

"I can't tell you anything, man. There's a reason why he got that name," Willy whimpered.

"I'll tell you what, Willy. If you don't tell me what's going on, I'm



going to stake you out next to a new vampire's grave. If you survive the feeding and become a vampire yourself, I'll fill your grave with cement and let you starve for eternity." I had heard from Giles that starvation would drive a vampire insane, especially if it was denied it's first feeding. By the sick look on Willy's face, I was sure he had heard the same thing himself.

"I don't know everything, I just know what some vamps were talking about in here earlier." Willy was starting to lose the sick look from his face as he talked. "Spike lost leadership of the vampires in Sunnydale - he was crippled in that fire and Angelus took over. Spike wants to recover and take over again. He's ticked off at Angelus for stealing Drusilla, so he needs to do a spell that would cure him and make him stronger than Angelus to beat him. Spike still has a few vampires that are loyal to him and they're trying to get what Spike needs for the spell together."

Willy had stopped after his last sentence, and looked away from me. None too gently I grabbed Willy's chin with my hand and jerked it toward me. "What do they need for the spell?" I ground out.

"They said that they would need a Slayer's blood," Willy said weakly. Seeing the look on my face, he hastily added, "They need the Slayer alive to do the ceremony and the spell, otherwise it won't work."

"Is there a certain time they need to do the spell? A certain day?" I was starting to lose my composure.

"The spell has to be done a half-hour before daybreak. There's no specific day." Willy's eyes were back to bouncing all over my face.

"So they could do it today, if they had the Slayer." I was starting to get a headache again. Daybreak was four hours away.

"Yeah, they could do it today, I guess. They don't need a lot of..." Willy's voice cut off and his eyes widened, looking over my shoulder.

I instantly dove to the side, which was a good thing because the ax crashed through the chair I was sitting in a quarter second later.

I did a hit and roll, winding up on my feet (thanks to my military training/memories), spun around and saw a hulking man in full vampire mode, holding a fire ax in his hands. Now, normally I had trouble taking on a vampire on equal terms, but this guy was six inches taller than me, fifty pounds heavier, and was holding that ax in his hands. So, I decided to take a cue from one of my favorite movies, "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Before I had entered the bar, I had put on some of the gear from the trunk of the car. Quickly, I drew a Beretta pistol from a thigh holster under my coat, took aim and fired one shot; right through the vampire's left kneecap. With a loud bellow, the vampire crashed to the floor.

I knew that a handgun bullet would probably not kill a vampire, but I had guessed that it could injure one enough to be able to take him out with the traditional weapons. That appeared to have worked in

this case.

With my right hand still holding the pistol, my left hand went inside my coat and pulled out a medium sized silver cross on a chain (one of the items from Buffy's house). Holding both the cross and the pistol out in front of me, I kicked the fire ax away from the moaning vampire. After uncocking the pistol, I holstered it, still holding the cross in my hand.

I looked over at Willy. He was still laying on the floor, hyperventilating, staring at the fallen vampire. He didn't look any worse than before, so I shifted my attention back to the vampire.

Looking down at the vampire, I said, "You are going to tell me what I need to know about Spike and the Slayer. How difficult it is is up to you," echoing what I had earlier said to Willy.

The vampire snarled at me. "I'll never tell you anything."

I sighed. Reaching into my coat again, I pulled out a vial of holy water. I remembered the time when Buffy had to question a female vampire when the vampires were trying to revive the Master. This was not going to be pleasant—especially for the vampire.

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Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 3:00 AM

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After a spirited conversation with the party-crashing vampire, he finally told me where Spike was hiding out. He also told me that everything had been set up and that Buffy was indeed alive. After confirming everything with Willy, I staked the vampire—after the conversation we had, the vampire did not mind at all.

I had tossed Willy into the caged area in the storeroom of his bar. I left his hands taped together to make sure that he would not be getting out anytime soon. To show that I was a nice guy, I left a large bowl of water in the cage. I knew that Willy would make his way out of the cage eventually, but not before daybreak, which was the important thing.

Right now, I was parked in an alley beside the factory, putting on the rest of the gear that I had borrowed from Uncle Tim and Buffy. After closing the trunk, I walked to the corner of the alley and looked at the doorway leading into the factory. Even though the streetlight was not working, I could see that there was a figure standing next to it: a vampire standing guard.

—

\_'You figure out how you're going to do this yet, kid?\_' For once, Dark Xander's voice was not mocking.

---

\_ 'The vamp said that there were fifteen vampires in Spike's group. Minus the three in the mall parking lot, the one in the bar, and Spike himself, that leaves ten vamps to deal with,' \_I replied silently.

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\_ 'Well, obviously you can't do a frontal assault on the factory. Ten-to-one odds with a hostage inside don't sound very good.' \_Dark Xander was thinking through the possible options: but then again so was I. \_ 'At least that vamp in the bar told you where they're holding Buffy in that place.' \_

\_ 'Yeah, but I was thinking of a more subtle approach,' \_ I thought to myself as I started walking toward the door and the figure standing next to it.

---

\_ 'What in the name of Hades do you think you're doing, kid! You're going to get killed!' \_ Dark Xander sounded nervous as I walked up to the vampire standing next to the door.

"I have a message for Spike from Drusilla. Open the door," I growled at the vampire at the door. My face had my Hyena Boy scowl on it, but my stomach was tied into knots from being this close to a hostile vampire.

The vampire showed his true face when he replied. "I don't know you. You have to show me what you are before I let you in."

I shrugged my shoulders. That caused a stake to drop from my coat sleeve into my hand, although the vampire did not see it. "Very well," I replied, and I thrust the stake into the vampire's chest. I watched as the surprised look on the vampire's face disintegrated as he exploded into dust.

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\_ 'Nice job, kid. Only next time, leave me at home when you try a hare-brained stunt like that again.' \_ Dark Xander had a certain amount of relief in his voice when he spoke.

---

\_ 'Not likely. You're stuck with me, partner,' \_ I replied silently as I quietly opened the door to the factory and slipped inside.

The vampire at the bar had told me that Buffy was being held at the basement level of the abandoned factory. The factory itself was not that large, covering an area the size of a small city block. As most of the windows of the factory had been smashed out, the vampires for the most part stayed at the basement level during the day. At anytime during the night there were four to six vampires around while the rest were out hunting. There were usually two guards posted at the entrances and two with Spike to assist him. Since the ceremony was to be held soon, all of the surviving vampires would be in attendance.

The chamber that Buffy was being held in was a short distance from Spike's own room, meaning if anything went wrong, there were at least two full strength vampires nearby to come rushing in to prevent escape. The vampire at the bar said that Buffy was chained to the wall and that the guards with Spike had the key. So if by some small miracle I got in to Buffy's chamber, I still had the matter of the chains to deal with.

The surprise came when I asked why the vampire had come to the bar to begin with. The vampire had replied that he was picking up blood plasma to take back to the factory. The ceremony involved a large amount of Slayer blood, and Buffy had passed out from the blood loss. The nurse-turned-vampire that had been collecting the blood through an IV setup was going to use the plasma to revive Buffy and to collect more blood from her, since even plasma that had been 'filtered' through Buffy contained the genetic elements that made the Slayer's blood so valuable.

Upon hearing all of this from the vampire, I had looked at Willy with no expression on my face. If possible, the bar owner had made himself even smaller, since he knew that he had been a part of this by supplying the IV setup and the plasma. After looking at Willy for a few seconds, I had turned back to the vampire and continued my questioning.

All this flashed through my head as I entered the factory. I knew the approximate location of Buffy's chamber in relation to the factory. The easy part was going to be finding the chamber. The medium part was going to be getting to the chamber without alerting the vampires. The hard part was going to be getting Buffy out of here, since at best she was weakened and at worst unconscious.

I figured that my initial plan from outside would still work. I continued walking through the corridor and down the stairs like I belonged there. I had a Beretta in my hand, held behind my back out of view as I walked. I knew that if I tried to sneak about I would be using up time that I did not have.

Upon turning the corner from the stairwell, I saw the glow of candles coming through a curtained off doorway. I knew that the first room was the vampire's common room, where they hung out. The rooms beyond it was used as living quarters by the low ranking vampires. Through the curtain I could hear several voices chanting - preparing for the ritual, I guess. I did not want to go in there if I could help it.

Across the hallway from the common room was Spike's chamber. Even as I looked around the corner I could see a vampire sitting in a chair, trying not to look bored. That meant that there was possibly one other vampire in the chamber with Spike. If I remembered correctly, the nurse/vampire usually was assigned to help Spike, although she might be with Buffy collecting more blood.

I could see the door to Buffy's chamber beyond the sitting vampire. It was approximately twenty-five yards from the vampire. I could see that the hallway beyond the vampire became a dead end, so I could not sneak in from the far end. In order to get to Buffy's chamber, I had to get past the vampire at Spike's door.

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\_'It looks like you have two choices here, kid. You could charge in shooting or try and bluff your way past that vamp. I don't like either choice myself.' \_ Dark Xander was full of cheer and good news as he spoke in my head.

—

\_'It doesn't look like I have a choice here. If I start shooting, every vamp is going to come running. I'd like to avoid that if possible,' \_ I replied silently as I quickly touch-checked my gear under the long black coat after holstering the Beretta. \_'It looks like I do the vamp routine again.'\_

— —

\_'Break a leg, kid. Talk to you after.'\_ Dark Xander knew that I did not need the distraction, so he kept quiet as I walked down the hall toward the vampire.

As the vampire saw me approach, he stood up and faced me. Fine, that made my task easier. Just as I was two steps from him, I shrugged my shoulders again, letting the stake drop into my hand from the coat sleeve. I took one more step and without a pause I slammed the stake home. Luckily, vampires don't make much noise as they turn to dust, so all I had to do was kick the dust pile under the chair to keep it out of sight. So much for bluffing.

As I kicked at the dust, I saw a key in the middle of the pile. I picked it up and saw that it was a padlock key. It must have been in the vampire's pocket when I dusted him. I had a feeling I knew what this key was for, so I hung on to it and walked down the hall to Buffy's door.

The door to Buffy's chambers was steel, with a regular doorknob and no lock. It surprised me for a second that the Slayer would be held under such light security, but I figured that the vampires thought that the chains would do the job. I put my hand on the knob, held my stake at the ready, and in one motion opened the door and rushed into the room.

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end rescue me chapter three

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4. RM 4

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rescue me chapter four

Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 3:30 AM

\*\*

The first thing I saw was that the room was lit by some candles set on a table in the far corner. A cot was in the opposite corner and I could see that Buffy was lying on it. Scanning the room quickly, I saw that except for the IV equipment on a table next to her and a chair next to the cot, the room was empty. I quietly closed the door and rushed over to Buffy's side. She looked unconscious, lying there with her eyes closed. Quickly, I put my fingers to her throat to check her pulse.

With a start, Buffy's eyes opened and tried to jerk away. She snarled, "Get away from me, you freaking ghoul, or I'llâ€¦" Buffy's voice trailed off as her eyes focused on my face.

I raised my hand from her throat to her lips. "Shhhâ€¦ you'll wake everyone up. And there's nothing worse than a cranky vampire," I whispered.

"Xaâ€¦ Xander? How did you find me? Get me out of these things." Buffy rattled the chains that were wrapped around her wrists above her head. The chains were attached to the stone wall, with another set of chains wrapped around Buffy's ankles and attached to the floor at the foot of the cot. I could see some blood around Buffy's wrists; she had been trying to pull her hands free without success. I took the key from the vampire outside and used it to open the padlocks holding the chains closed.

While I unlocked the chains and unhooked the IV line from Buffy's arm, I gave her a quick once-over. Buffy looked like hell; her clothes were dirty and scuffed, like she had been rolling through a dirt pile. There were scratches on her arms and legs, and her face was pale under her tan. A small part of my mind noted that she still looked good despite all that, but that thought left as soon as it had popped up.

Buffy sat up and winced, her hand going to her head above her right ear where I could see a cut and a lump from a blow. Looking at her closely, I asked, "How are you feelingâ€¦ no BS."

"I'm fine. The vamps in the parking lot hit me on the head and I still have a headache. I dusted three of them but they rushed me and knocked me out. How is it that you're here? I saw you go headfirst into the pavement. And what's with the coat? You look like a vamp dressed like that." While she was talking, Buffy gave me a quick once-over of her own.

"It's a long story. Can you walk? We have to get out here - I don't know how long we have before the vamps know what's up." I helped Buffy to her feet, but she started to sway and quickly sat down again.

"How much blood did they take from you?" I looked at the IV gear on the table and saw that there were no containers of blood there; the IV shunt I had removed from Buffy's arm had been shut off.

"I think about a quart," Buffy said, rubbing her arm where the IV needle had been.

I whistled softly. An adult had about four quarts of blood in their

body. Only Buffy's Slayer healing factor had kept her from being dead from blood loss or at the very least unconscious.

"You didn't answer my question, Xander. How did you find me here? Even I don't know where we are." Buffy was looking at my face with an odd expression of curiosity, surprise and respect on her face.

"I went to the Vampire Information Council and they gave me the address for the renegade vamps plotting to overthrow Angelus. You know what's going on here, right?" I asked.

"Oh, yeah. Spike himself told me that my blood would help him beat Angelus and take over again. As much as I want Angel back, this is a bit much." Buffy was looking down at her arm as she talked.

"Well, we have to get out before they come back for a refill. Do you know how much they need for the ceremony?"

"They need three quarts to do their mumbo-jumbo deal, but they need me alive at the same time. Otherwise, they just would have drained me and been done with it." Buffy gave a small shudder. In a lower voice, she said, "I can't believe I let those geeks take me."

"Hey, hey, hey... How many vamps attacked you in the parking lot?" I gently pulled Buffy's chin up so that she was looking at me in the face.

"Eight. There were two under your mom's car and six more pulled up in a van after you were knocked out." Buffy was still speaking in a low voice. "I staked three of them but one of them hit me on the head from behind."

"Considering that you were up against eight vamps, you have nothing to be ashamed of. We're still both alive, aren't we?" I smiled at Buffy, but she did not return it.

"If you say so. You hit your head on the concrete out there... you could have died." Buffy looked down at her arm again.

This was getting serious. I had not seen Buffy this down since the Master had killed her before she left for LA for the summer. Time to do something else.

"Buffy, if you want to feel bad about losing a fight, go right ahead. But I risked my butt to come in here to get you out. Now, I'm getting the heck out of here. You want to stay and brood or you leaving with me?" My voice was cold, but I was carefully watching Buffy's eyes as I spoke.

Buffy's face hardened and she looked at me with a trace of anger. "You're right. It's time to blow this pop stand. You have any of my weapons with you?"

"Oh, yeah." I reached under my coat and pulled out two stakes and the silver cross from earlier and handed them to Buffy. Once again I helped Buffy to her feet and this time she was able to stay standing, although she was still a bit shaky. Buffy put the chain with the cross on around her neck and stuck one of the stakes in her right boot top, holding the other one in her hand.

"What are we going up against out there, Xander?" Buffy's voice has that intent quality in it, just like at the arcade. It was a lot more reassuring than before.

"Minus all the vamps that have been staked, there should be only eight vamps out there, plus Spike. We need to get out of here before they find that Spike's guard was dusted and come in here to check. We're going to have to go straight out of here and to the left - we don't have time to mess around. If we do run into trouble, fall back and let me deal with it - you're still weak," I said gruffly.

"Hold the phone, buster. I'm the Slayer, remember? How are you going to deal with full strength vamps by yourself?" Buffy was giving me a 'who the heck are you kidding' look while she talked.

I sighed and opened the long black coat. For the first time Buffy saw the gear I was carrying and her eyes nearly bugged out. "What the heck did you do, raid the Army base again?"

I grinned at Buffy's remark. Under the coat I was wearing a gun belt with two Beretta pistols in tactical holsters, one strapped down to each leg. Ammo pouches containing spare magazines for the pistols were clipped to the front of the belt. A couple of stakes were attached to the shoulder harness of the gun belt for fast access. Behind the holsters were a couple of pouches containing extra goodies and a Ka-Bar combat knife. I drew a Beretta with a tactical light mounted beneath it from a holster and checked the chamber and the pressure switch before letting it go dark again.

"No, I didn't raid the Army base again. My days of committing federal felonies are over. I borrowed this gear and I mean to return it. I'm going to take point on our way out, though. If you see me bring my gun up to fire, start screaming. The sound of the gunshots in these rooms can blow out your eardrums and the screaming will help equalize the pressure in your ears."

While I talked, I pulled out the second Beretta, unsnapped the safety, and handed it and a spare magazine to Buffy. "Tuck the spare mag into your other boot. You have fifteen shots in each mag - if you use this gun and run empty, push this button and the empty mag will drop out. Slap the new mag in and pull the slide back to chamber the first round. You turn the light on the pistol on by squeezing this strip on the grip" I demonstrated with my pistol and Buffy followed suit, decocking the pistol after loading it. "Don't fire unless we're about to be overrun - I want to get out of here with my hearing intact. If you do fire, aim for the knees, hips, or head. If they can't stand they can't attack well and a head shot might dust them."

I reholstered my pistol and pulled out a stake. Buffy shoved her pistol into her waistband and held her stake at the ready as well. We both moved next to the door and Buffy gave a small start when I took hold of her left hand and put it on top of my right shoulder. "Hold onto my shoulder - I don't want us to get separated. If you let go, I'll come back and get you. Any questions?" I asked.

"Yeah. What happens if we get into it deep out there?" Buffy had her hand on my shoulder, so she was looking up at my face when she spoke.



"Try to stay low... I have a couple of surprises in reserve. You ready?" My left hand was on the doorknob

"Yeah. This is like that video game, isn't it?" Buffy was looking at the door intently.

"Yep. Don't shoot me here either."

I pulled the door open, surprising the two vampires that were standing outside just about to come in.

For half a second we gaped at each other. The vampire who was closest to the door was male, early 20's, normal looking. The other vampire, however, was a looker. This one was a female, late 20's, with dark brown hair and a good figure. She had a case in her hand and had a stethoscope around her neck.

In a heartbeat, the two vampires showed their true faces and charged us. We got knocked back into the room but we stayed on our feet. Quickly, we faced off and started pounding the snot out of each other.

I had lost my stake when I had been knocked back and the male vampire was too close for me to reach for another one. The vampire was throwing punches and kicks and I was too busy ducking and blocking to do much with the blows I was throwing.

Finally, I kicked out at the vampire and connected with his knee with a crack. The vampire dropped to the floor and I quickly drew another stake and dusted him. Spinning around, I saw that Buffy was barely holding her own against the female vampire. I started toward them, but then Buffy spun the vampire around, put her in an arm lock and staked the vampire through her back.

Looking at Buffy, I saw that she was trying to catch her breath. Sheathing the stake I had used on the male vampire, I picked up the one I had dropped and walked up to Buffy. She was breathing normally again but was looking a bit pale. She was looking down at the stethoscope that was lying in the dust pile that had been the female vampire.

"That who I think it is?" I said, looking down at the dust pile.

"Yeah - that was the witch that was taking my blood." Buffy looked up at me, her color returning to normal.

"Time to boogie, Buff. Let's go." Buffy put her hand on my shoulder and we were about to go out the door when we heard a commotion outside. It sounded like people running down the hall.

Our blood ran cold when we heard the voice that roared out the command, "FIND THE SLAYER AND BRING HER TO ME ALIVE! KILL EVERYONE ELSE!"

It was the voice of Angelus.

\*\*

end rescue me chapter four

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## 5. RM 5

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rescue me chapter five

Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 3:40 AM

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Without saying a word, Buffy and I sheathed our stakes and pulled out our pistols again. We both knew without speaking that there was no way we could sneak out now and that we were going to have to force our way out.

Holding up my finger in a 'wait a minute' sign, I dropped to one knee, and peered around the doorframe into the hallway. Down the hall I could see people struggling next to the entrance to the common room. That meant that the only way out of the hallway was blocked.

—

\_'It is now official, kid... you are now in it up to your neck. Any ideas?' \_ Dark Xander spoke quietly in my mind.

—

\_'I don't know how many vamps are out there. The only way out of this hall is blocked. I know there is another exit from this floor, but it's through the common room. I need to cut down the number of vamps.' \_ I replied silently.

—

\_'You going to dig in, then?' \_Dark Xander did not sound enthused about the idea.

—

\_'Yeah, until we even down the odds. They want Buffy alive, so they won't do anything drastic... at least for a while. Then we'll punch our way out.' \_ I thought silently.

—

\_'It's going to be daybreak soon. If you try to punch your way out after that, the vamps won't be able to fall back. They'll have to stand and fight or risk being incinerated. If you are going to do something, do it soon.' \_ Dark Xander advised.

Ducking back into the room, I stood and glanced down at my watch -

3:40 AM. That meant that I had a little more than two hours before daybreak.

Turning to Buffy I saw that her arms were wrapped around herself, and that she was shivering slightly, probably from stress and the blood loss. Quickly, I reholstered my pistol and took off my coat and put it around her shoulders. The coat almost touched the floor when she was wearing it, but it would be manageable for now.

Buffy's eyes were fixed on my left side. "Damn, Xander. You sure you have enough weapons with you?"

"You know me, Buffy. Always overdressed for the occasion." I unslung the Mossberg riot shotgun from under my left arm and readjusted the tactical sling that had kept it there. I checked to make sure that the tube magazine had the full eight rounds loaded and that the chamber was clear.

"From what I can guess, Dead Boy found out that the Billy Idol-wannabe had taken you prisoner and figured out what he was trying to do. They must have been tearing up the town trying to find you; that's why I didn't find any vamps on the street. So what they're here to do is to stop Spike and to get you. From what I could see, they outnumber Spike's vamps and they'll finish them off in a few minutes. Then they'll come looking for you. We don't have much time."

"What's your plan, Xander?" Buffy had stopped shivering and was looking intent again.

"We barricade ourselves down here and reduce the vamps to a more manageable number. Then we force our way out. We have to do this before daybreak, or the vamps won't back off - they'll turn into crispy critters. Once we get to the end of the hall, we can go up the stairs to the ground floor and out or we go through the common room on the right and up and out. Once we're on the move, we're not stopping for anything. No hand-to-hand if we can help it...you're too weak and I'm not at their level. Shoot vamps that are in the way, but that's it."

"Sounds good, Xander. You want to wait until they come to us to start the party, or do we invite them in?" Buffy asked with a mischievous smile on her face.

"Let's invite them in... I'm a instant gratification kind of guy."

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Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 3:50 AM

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We stood next to the door and listened to the sounds of the fight down the hall. Spike's guys gave it a good shot but it sounded like they were almost finished. Buffy and I had heard the shouts from

Spike's room when Angelus' guys broke in; all they found was an empty wheelchair. Apparently, one of Spike's bodyguards carried him out in the middle of the fight, leaving his guys behind to fight and die. Typical. After we heard Angelus give the order to search the floor for the Slayer, we set the plan we had come up with into motion.

Buffy stepped out the door and into view. Seeing at least five vampires standing in the hall in front of Spike's door, she called out, "Yoo hoo! Looking for someone?"

When the vampires saw the Slayer standing in the hall, they started running toward her in full vampire mode... not that it did them much good for what happened next.

As soon as Buffy saw that the vampires had seen her, she ducked back into the room, covered her ears and started screaming. This was because as soon as Buffy had cleared the door I popped out into the hallway, and screaming loudly myself, started to rapid-fire the shotgun at the approaching vampires.

Uncle Tim's shotgun was a Mossberg riot gun; it had a short 20 inch barrel and it was loaded with double-ought buck. Each shell contained nine pellets that were as wide as a .32 caliber bullet. Multiply nine pellets time the eight shells that were loaded in the shotgun - seventy-two projectiles were fired in approximately eight seconds into the oncoming vampires in the narrow hallway.

What I had told Buffy earlier about the effect of gunshots on hearing in these rooms was entirely accurate; even with me screaming, those blasts hurt. The flashes of each shot from the riot gun was like the strobe from a flash camera, freezing the vampires in bright yellow light as they slowly came apart from the impact of the buckshot in a spray of blood that turned to dust.

The first three vampires took the brunt of the volley; they dusted after the first four shots. The other two vampires had caught some pellets in the legs and fell on the floor. I continued firing and one more dusted before the gun came up dry and I ducked back into the room.

Buffy was ready to go when I ducked in. She dropped to one knee, and covered by the doorframe leaned out into the hall, her Beretta at the ready. As I quickly reloaded the riot gun, Buffy called out, "There's one vamp left, and he's crawling back to the other end of the hall. It looks like your plan is working, Xander."

After I topped off the riot gun and pumped in a round, I stood at the doorframe, above and behind Buffy. "If your ex-boyfriend runs true to form, he'll order another assault before he wises up. Be ready to move when you see them coming."

Even with the slight hearing loss from the gunshots, we could hear Angelus screaming at his people, ordering them to attack again. After a couple of minutes, we heard the pounding of running feet and in unison Buffy moved back into the room and I moved out into the hall again.

In the half second before I fired I saw that this was a larger group than before - at least eight vampires. Angelus probably hoped to

overwhelm us through sheer numbers, not that his plan was going to work. I started to fire again and this time five vampires went down and dusted. The other three vampires were wounded and falling back before I ran dry.

Switching places again, Buffy covered the hall while I reloaded and stood by, waiting to hear what Angelus was going to do next. By this time I had some serious ringing in my ears, so I watched Buffy to see what she could hear, as she had protected her hearing better than I had.

Finally, Buffy looked up at me. "You guessed right. They're building a barricade at the end of the hall while they go and get reinforcements. There's two other raiding parties out there, and once they get everyone together they plan to smoke us out. They're saying the barricade is strong enough to absorb gunshots and if we try to go over they'll overwhelm us."

I grinned. "Good... I love it when everything goes to plan."

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Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 4:00 AM

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After switching the loads in the riot gun and making sure that Buffy and I had all our gear on and ready, we staged at the door again. Quickly looking down the hall I saw the barricade that the vampires had quickly put together. It looked like it had been put together from furnishings from the vampire's living quarters and was about shoulder high. It was perfect for our purposes.

Looking at Buffy, I was struck by how comical and how beautiful she looked. She had put on my coat correctly and it was hanging open for quick access to her gear. The coat still reached to the floor, and she looked like a kid that was wearing an adult's clothes. Buffy had kept my coat in order to protect herself from injury, as the skirt and blouse she was wearing didn't do that all that well. But in spite of her disheveled appearance and the coat, Buffy still looked as good as when she had been modeling dresses at the mall last night/a million years ago.

Snapping back to the present, I looked down the hall again and saw that there were some vampires moving around behind the barricade, about four of them. I didn't know the total number of vampires there were in the building, but I did know that I didn't want to wait for the other two raiding parties to join the festivities. So there was no time like the present to get the ball rolling.

I had to be careful of the number of shotgun shells I fired. Except for the specialty loads that were now loaded, I had only two more full reloads of buckshot shells left. I would not be able to reload fast enough in a middle of a fight if I ran dry. If that happened, we would have to use the Beretta pistols and the wooden stakes -

something I did not look forward to.

I looked down at Buffy and saw her looking up at me. Seeing how intent and serious she looked, I gave her a small smile and winked at her. Startled, Buffy grinned back at me.

"Ready, Summers?" I asked in a low voice.

"You know me, Harris. I'm always ready." As soon as Buffy saw me bring up the riot gun to my shoulder to fire, she covered her ears and screamed.

I started to fire at the barricade, aiming at the wall behind it and the vampires. Instead of the buckshot I had used before I was firing signal flares. These flares were designed to go a hundred yards before igniting a magnesium fuel, creating a brilliant white light that would last approximately ten seconds. The flares were supposed to be fired straight up into the sky, but the way I was using them, they would bounce off the wall after shattering into pieces and into the barricade - and the vampires - before igniting at over 1500 degrees F.

After firing the four flares in the riot gun, I could hear the screams of the vampires caught in the fire. At least a couple of the flares had bounced into the barricade, as it was on fire as well. Waiting fifteen seconds for the fire to weaken the barricade, I fired the remaining four shells into the barricade itself. These shells contained solid slugs, about half an inch wide and weighing about an ounce each. The slugs blew materials from the barricade and left a clear path on the right side. Quickly reloading the riot gun with buckshot shells, I started down the hall with Buffy right behind me, her Beretta at the ready.

Reaching the barricade, I held the riot gun at the ready, sweeping the area behind it. All I could see were some dust piles on the floor, but I could hear yelling and running feet coming down the stairway on the left. That meant we had to go out through the common room. Making sure that Buffy's hand was still on my shoulder, we turned and went through the door on the right.

Quickly sweeping the room, I saw that the room was empty of vampires. The room looked trashed, both from the battle between the two groups of vampires and the looting of materials to build the barricade outside. I could see that there were two doors leading from the large room. If I recalled the information from the vampire at the bar correctly, the door on the left led up and out. The door on the right led to another series of rooms but not out. Not an area I wanted to be in with hostile vampires looking for me.

Looking back at Buffy, I saw that she was scanning the room as well. Catching her eye, I gestured at the door on the left and pointed up. Buffy nodded her understanding and we quickly moved to the door.

Hearing the sounds of the vampires coming down the stairwell behind us, I moved to the doorknob side of the door and holding the riot gun at the ready, gestured for Buffy to open the door. Just as Buffy reached for the knob, the door burst open, and four vampires poured out in to the room.

Just before a vampire crashed into me I managed to fire one shot, hitting another vampire in the head, dusting him instantly. The riot gun was knocked from my hands, causing it to fall to my side, hanging from the sling. The vampire and I were struggling and I couldn't reach for the riot gun or the Beretta.

The vampire was trying to reach for my throat, his fangs visible. My hands were around his neck, trying to keep him from getting to my throat. Quickly I put my foot behind the vampire's leg and pushed forward, causing us both to crash to the floor. I managed to land on top of the vampire elbows first, knocking the wind out of him. Grabbing a stake from my shoulder harness, I slammed it through the vampire's chest, dropping me to the floor in a cloud of dust.

Throughout this, Buffy's Beretta had been firing. Jumped up from the floor I saw that there was one vampire writhing on the floor with wounds to his hip and upper legs and that Buffy was struggling with the other vampire, trying to keep the pistol's muzzle away from herself and toward the vampire. Coming up behind the vampire, I rammed the stake through his back, causing Buffy to almost lose her balance when the vampire dusted.

Turning toward the hallway door I saw that the vampires from the hall were about to come through. I grabbed the riot gun hanging at my side, and in one motion pumped in a new shell as I brought it up to my shoulder and fired. After three shots the doorway was clear and two more vampires were dusted. While I was firing, Buffy staked the vampire on the floor.

The situation was turning bad fast. There were vampires in front and behind us and I was running low on ammo for the riot gun. For all I knew the exits had been blocked off. We had to get of that room  
\*now\*.

"Buffy! Take point! I'll cover our backs!" I yelled. I was changing the plan by sending Buffy first, but I knew for a fact that the vampires were coming up behind us and we had to get moving.

While I called out to Buffy, I reloaded the riot gun and let it fall to my side. I drew the Beretta and squeezed the pressure switch, causing the light mounted on the pistol to turn on. I swapped pistols with Buffy and started firing into the hall doorway to keep the vampires back, emptying the pistol. I dropped the empty mag and rapidly loaded a new one, turning on the light on this pistol. Moving quickly to the door on the left, I put my hand on Buffy's shoulder and we both moved through the open door.

The door was at the bottom of a stairwell leading up to the ground floor. The stairwell was not lit but the lights on the pistols showed the steps on the way up. Moving quickly, we reached the top of the stairs and came up to a partially open door. Switching places with Buffy, she pulled open the door while I scanned the hall beyond it. Empty. We moved through and shut the door behind us, jamming it shut with a timber that was lying in the hall.

We continued down the hall, Buffy covering the right and me covering the left. We were rapidly coming up on another door, which should have been the second to last door before we were outside.

Buffy opened the door while I covered her with the riot gun. As the door opened, I saw that the room was clear. I stepped through the door and suddenly someone standing \*beside\* the doorway grabbed the riot gun and ripped it out of my hands, sending it flying across the room. The force of the shotgun being torn away pulled me toward my attacker - Angelus.

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end rescue me chapter five

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6. RM 6

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rescue me chapter six

Abandoned Factory

Somewhere in Sunnydale,

Saturday, 4:05 AM

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As I plowed into Angelus, he grabbed me by the arms and pulled me up. For a split second I thought that he was going to rip my throat out, but instead he spun me around and wrapped his arm around my neck, holding me between him and Buffy.

"Hello, lover. I didn't expect to find you in a place like this, but then I found one of Spike's vampires and he couldn't stop talking, after I... reasoned with him." As Angelus spoke to Buffy, I could feel his cold breath on the side of my face.

Buffy had her pistol up and aimed at Angelus, but she had a sick look on her face - from her facing off with her demon ex-boyfriend or the fact that said demon literally had me in his hands, I couldn't tell. I bet the look on my face wasn't any better.

"Let him go, Angel. This is between the two of us." Buffy's voice was not steady, but the pistol was - unfortunately, I was between the pistol and Angelus.

"I think not. That gun won't kill me but I don't want to get holes in my clothes. Besides, your friends have always been fair game. Drop the gun, or I snap geek boy's neck."

"I drop the gun and you'll kill both of us. Walk away, Angel... you stopped Spike's plan. You're already ahead on points," Buffy kept the pistol aimed at Angelus' head.

While the two of them were talking, I was inching a stake out of my sleeve and into my hand. The way Angelus was holding me I would not be able to stake him in the heart, but I might be able to get him to let me go and let Buffy get a clear shot at him.



When the stake was fully in my hand, I quickly reversed it and stabbed Angelus in the upper leg. He let out a howl of pain, but he didn't release me. Instead he reached down, pulled the stake from his leg with a grunt and brought it up to my neck.

"Alright, geek boy. You asked for it." Reversing it, Angelus slammed the stake into my chest and threw me to the side. I wound up on the floor, numb and breathless, about three steps from him and Buffy.

Buffy screamed when she saw me drop - not to protect her ears, but from shock and rage. The cracks of gunshots filled the air as Buffy started firing the Beretta at Angelus, but she was aiming at his chest and rapid-firing, causing her to miss with some of her shots. The shots that were hitting Angelus had little effect beside knocking him back a couple of feet.

Finally, the slide locked back on the pistol - empty. Angelus has still standing a few feet in front of Buffy, showing his true face and no visible damage except for his shredded shirt.

Laughing, Angelus started walking toward Buffy. "You're out of ammo and you're not strong enough to fight me, Slayer. Who's going to save you now?"

Unseen, I had drawn my Beretta while still laying on the floor. When Buffy ran dry and Angelus started toward her, I began to fire.

I was firing slower and more accurately than Buffy, but my shots were still off. I hit Angelus in the upper leg, in the side, and in the elbow, shattering it. When Angelus spun toward me, snarling in pain and shock, I started to fire at his head. I missed those shots, but Angelus, knowing that a head shot could kill him, turned and ran from the room. I kept firing at him through the doorway he went through until my pistol locked open.

Buffy rushed toward me and dropped down to the floor, looking at the stake still protruding from my chest dead center. I sat up and started to reload my empty pistol when Buffy grabbed my shirt and pulled my face toward hers.

"Xander! You're still alive! How can you be alive with a stake in your chest!" Buffy was almost screaming in my face.

I put the pistol down and reached up to my chest and pulled out the stake - there was no blood on it and the tip was broken. After I tossed it aside, I took hold of Buffy's hand and knocked it against my chest. We both heard a dull solid sound. "Kevlar body armor with laminate ceramic trauma plate. The plate kept the stake from going through. I'm going to have a hell of a bruise, though," I said with a slight smile.

"You son of a bitch!!! I though you were dead! Why the hell didn't you tell me you were wearing body armor!" Buffy was still screaming at me when I put my hand over her mouth, shutting her up.

"Not now, Buffy. We still have to get out of here." I finished reloading the pistol and tossed a full mag to Buffy, who barely caught it. We both stood up and as Buffy reloaded her Beretta, I went across the room and picked up the riot gun, which wasn't damaged.

Moving toward the outside door, I carefully looked out and saw no one on the street. Moving quickly, Buffy and I moved out the door and went down the sidewalk toward the alley.

We came up to Uncle Tim's car and I tossed the riot gun and the extra gear into the trunk. By this time, the fire from the basement had spread to the upper levels, and smoke and flames were becoming visible. Just as Buffy and I jumped into the front seat, we heard sirens approaching. Quickly I started the car and drove away from the sirens and the burning factory.

I looked over at Buffy, who was slumped against the passenger door, looking exhausted. "You look like hell, Buffy. You want to go to the hospital?"

Buffy's face jerked toward me. "No! No hospitals! I just need some rest. I don't think we should go to either of our houses tonight, the vamps might be still looking for us. Is there somewhere else we can go?"

I spun the steering wheel, turning a corner quickly. "You're in luck. I know just the place for us to be alone and no one will look for us there." I grinned at Buffy, who returned the smile wanly.

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Timothy Harris' House,

Sunnydale,

Saturday, 9:00 AM

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After we got to Uncle Tim's house at 4:30 AM, I kept myself busy. I parked the car in the garage and led Buffy into the house. After she cleaned herself up in the bathroom, I gave her a set of sweats to wear and brought her down to the kitchen, where we ate an entire box of cereal - she was hungry from the blood loss and I had my normal appetite to deal with. After she finished eating, I led her to Uncle Tim's bedroom and put her to bed.

While Buffy was sleeping, I brought back all the gear from the car and took it to the spare bedroom containing the arms locker. I cleaned all the firearms and put them back in the locker, and stowed the other gear in the proper boxes. The only thing I did not put back was the Kevlar body armor - the vest had a large hole over the trauma plate. The stake had not actually penetrated the plate, but had left a crack in the laminate ceramic. If the plate had not been there, the stake would have penetrated the Kevlar - and me.

By the time that was all done, it was 8:30 AM. I bit the bullet (figuratively speaking) and called my parents at home. After spending ten minutes trying to calm down my mom, I finally convinced them that I was OK and had wandered from the hospital to Willow's house, where I fell asleep. I promised to go back to the hospital for a check-up, but I said that I had to go to the police station to give my statement. When I finally got off the phone, it had been twenty-five minutes and I had a throbbing headache.

I walked into the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror. The icepack the night before had helped: the black eye had not developed. Except for my eyes being a little bloodshot, I looked like I did everyday.

Dark Xander spoke quietly in my mind. \_'You did it, kid. You went in and saved the girl and hurt the bad guys. You even messed up Angelus pretty bad - that elbow will take a while to heal. Were you really expecting to look different?'\_ \_

\_'Not really. I just don't feel like the same old Xander anymore. It's like the kid part of me went away.' \_ I replied to myself silently.

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\_'That kid part will always be a part of you, just like I'm a part of you. Once you've gotten some sleep, you'll feel better. Only now you know that you are capable of more than you thought possible. Having something in reserve will help you in the future. Especially if you continue slaying with Buffy and the others,' \_ Dark Xander finished quietly.

There was not much to say after that. I took a shower, put on some shorts and a t-shirt and went in to check on Buffy. She was deeply asleep, her breathing steady and deep. After making sure she was OK, I went back to the spare bedroom, lay down on the bed, and instantly fell asleep.

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Timothy Harris' House,

Sunnydale,

Saturday, 12:00 PM

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After my nap, I went to check on Buffy and saw that she was still asleep. I returned to the spare bedroom and went into the closet and brought out Uncle Tim's guitar.

I had learned to play as a ten year old on this guitar from Uncle Tim. I actually got pretty good and Uncle Tim gave me a guitar of my own for my eleventh birthday. I still had that guitar at home, but after I discovered girls at age twelve, I had not used it all that much.

I sat cross-legged on the bed and tried some chords to make sure that the guitar was in tune. After some adjusting, I began to play a Everlast song I had heard on the radio. It took me some time to get the hang of it, but after a few minutes, I was playing smoothly. I had not played in over a year and it surprised me how fast I picked it up again.

I was playing with my eyes on the guitar when I felt someone watching me. I looked up and saw that Buffy was standing in the doorway, watching me play. "Don't stop, Xander," she said quietly.

I continued playing and Buffy came into the room and sat down on the bed, facing me. She sat there and watched me until I finished the melody. "I never knew that you knew how to play guitar, Xander. That was pretty good," Buffy said in a low voice.

"I'm a renaissance man. Alexander Harris, high school student, amateur musician, part time vampire hunter. There's many facets to my character. Did my playing wake you up?" I asked.

"No. I was laying there thinking about everything that happened last night when I first heard you. You never did tell me anything last night - you were in too much of a hurry. You can tell me now, you know," Buffy said, her tone a quiet command.

While I slowly picked at the strings on the guitar I began to recount last night's adventures. I told her about awaking up in the hospital and figuring out what had happened to her. I told her about coming here and picking up the gear and about my talk with Willy the Snitch, which put a small smile on her face. She lost the smile when I told her about the vampire in the bar and how I questioned him. I told her about sneaking into the factory and finding her. Finally, I told her what I had done after she went to sleep this morning.

"We're going to have to figure out a story to tell the police and our parents. We can't tell them that you were kidnapped by vampires and that I went in with heavy weapons to get you out and burned the factory down. So the best I can come up with is that we got into a fight with some muggers and you got hit on the head and you blacked out. You found yourself at home later that night and everything was alright. If we both tell the cops that and just give them vague descriptions, everything should be OK. That sound good to you?" I asked.

"That sounds fine. You surprised me last night, Xander. The last person I expected to see in that room was you. Especially with you dressed that way. For a second, I thought I was flashing back to when you were possessed by the hyena spirit." Buffy was looking at me in an odd way; I couldn't read her expression.

"I did what you would have done, Buff. I just needed the weapons to even the odds," I replied.

"How are going to explain that hole in the vest to your uncle?" Buffy looked at the Kevlar body armor, which was draped over the back of a chair.

"I don't know about that - I may have to lose the vest and hope that he doesn't notice for a while. I'll think of something."

"I'm sorry that I called you a son of a bitch, Xander. I got pretty torqued when I saw Angel stab you in the chest with that stake, and then you kept him from getting me." Buffy was looking me straight in the eyes while she talked.

"Forget about it. I wouldn't have been too calm in your place." I finished the melody I was playing and glanced away from Buffy - the look in her eyes was getting intense.

"What are we going to tell Giles and the others? They're all going to

be back on Monday," Buffy asked.

"The truth? It's not like we did anything wrong. And I'm sure they will be amazed that Research Boy was able to save the Slayer from the clutches of both Spike and Angelus." I stood and put the guitar back in its case. After I put the case away in the closet, I saw that Buffy had also stood and was walking toward me, stopping a foot away from me. "I'll take you home now if you want, Buffy.

"Remember when we walked out into the mall parking lot last night... what I said I would do if you rescued me some day?" With Buffy standing so close that she was actually looking up at me, I flashed back for an instant to the love spell in the library.

"My memory's a little hazy - I don't know what you're talking about." Sure - how *could* I forget?

"Well, I remember. And I keep my promises." With that, Buffy reached up and pulled my head down slowly toward hers. Just before our lips touched, her eyes closed and her mouth opened slightly.

The kiss was like nothing I had ever experienced. I had kissed Willow years ago during a game of spin the bottle and we had both been giggling throughout. When I kissed Cordelia, it was all hormones and fireworks. But kissing Buffy was like the kiss you see older couples having. This kiss had respect and friendship and great affection and perhaps even love. It was a kiss that could lead to passion, but we both knew that that was not in the cards for us.

So while we kissed and tasted each other, our hands stayed still, mine on her waist and her's on my shoulders. And when we finally broke the kiss we were breathing heavily and our hearts were pounding but we knew that we would not go any further.

We stood there for a few minutes, our arms around each other, Buffy's head against my shoulder, feeling each other's heart beat in unison. After a while we finally separated and looked at each other, trying to figure out what to say.

"Buffy - " "Xander -" We both started to speak at the same moment, stopping when we heard the other start. We both grinned and I motioned for Buffy to speak first.

"Xander, you're my best male friend." Buffy's hand was against my cheek, touching me lightly while she talked. "You're someone that I would trust with my life. I don't want to mess that up."

I reached up and took Buffy's hand in mine, stroking the top of her hand with my thumb. "Yeah, I was pretty much thinking the same thing. You know that I had a major crush on you, I didn't hide that very well." Buffy gave a small smile at that. "But our relationship has gone beyond that. We are just good friends and we're better off that way. Besides, you would probably kill me sooner or later for being a flake or a jerk."

"Don't say that Xander. You can be a jerk once in a while, but you are not a flake. You stuck by me through things that would send most people running away screaming. And when you do act jerky, it's because you are trying to protect me or the group. I can live with that, but don't do it very often or I will punch your lights out,"

Buffy finished with a smile on her face.

"I can live with that." I echoed Buffy, putting my other hand around her's, then letting go. "I guess we better get going before my parents get hysterical and start looking for me. You ready to go now?"

"Yeah, just let me grab my things. How are we getting home?" Buffy asked as we walked out of the bedroom.

"By one of Sunnydale's premier mass transit vehicles, chauffeured by a kind and respectful employee of the city." I replied, with a straight expression on my face.

"The bus? Man, have we gone down in status. I think I'd rather be driving around in your uncle's car, fighting the forces of darkness in torn and dirty clothes."

"Thanks Buffy. That's another image of you that's going to be burned into my memory." We both laughed as we walked down the hall.

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Sunnydale High School

Monday, 3:10 PM

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As I walked toward the library after my last class I was thinking of what I had done in the day before. After I had dropped off Buffy at her place on Saturday, I had gone home and endured a ten minute hugging and crying session by my mother. When I finally convinced her that I was alright, I had gone up to my room and changed the clothes I was wearing - I had left Uncle Tim's clothes at his place and was wearing my dirty clothes from Friday night. After was sure that my parents would not notice I was gone, I went back to Uncle Tim's place and cleaned up, making sure nothing stood out and showed that me and a girl had been there that weekend - I could just image my family's reaction if they thought that.

On Sunday I had spent half the day in bed catching up on sleep. I got up around noon and went to the police station to file my report on the attack Friday night. The rest of the day I spent working on my belated book report. I did not think that my English teacher was going to accept the excuse that I had to save the Slayer from vampires for not doing the assignment. But with the help of the Cliff Notes, (which had stayed in my jacket pocket after all that had happened), I finished a report that in my opinion would net me a solid 'B', which was rare enough.

I paused outside the double library doors, hearing Buffy's voice as she talked. Taking a quick peek, I saw that Buffy was sitting at the head of the table with the other Slayerettes with Giles and Jenny Calendar standing a little to the side. From the look on everyone's faces, I could see that they had a little trouble believing what Buffy was telling them.

"...So there I was, Angel coming toward me, with me thinking that I

was toast because my gun was empty and we both knew that I wouldn't be able to take him on because I was too weak, when Xander starts firing from the floor and hits him in the side and the elbow and finally starts firing at his head. Angel takes off and there I am screaming at Xander because I thought he was dead but it turned out he was wearing body armor that stopped the stake from hurting him. So Xander finally shuts me up and we go outside and get in the car and take off. And that's what happened on my weekend. Pretty cool, huh?"

Giles was the first of the group to respond. "It was rather astonishing, Buffy, that you escaped from both Angelus and Spike. But the fact that it was Xander by himself that rescued you is what make this tale so ..." Giles struggled to find the right word.

"Unbelievable?" Cordelia piped up. Everyone looked daggers at my erstwhile girlfriend, which Cordy did not notice, as usual.

"I was going to say noteworthy, Cordelia. Do you find it hard to believe that Xander could accomplish what he did?" Giles had taken his glasses off and was looking at Cordelia as he spoke. "We all are capable of great acts of bravery, but the fact that Xander overcame such overwhelming odds to save Buffy is what makes this story so..." Giles struggled for a word again.

"Heroic?" This time it was Willow that spoke up.

"That is more like it. Thank you Willow. For such an act in the military, Xander would have been rewarded with some of the highest awards for valor. It is a pity that we can not publicly acknowledge Xander's actions, but perhaps we can treat him with a little more respect than we have in the past." Giles put his glasses back on and looked at everyone at the table.

"You mean we have to treat Xander like he is actually someone that matters? I guess we could do that, but that would require a total wardrobe makeover. Can you actually believe some of the shirts that he wears? I think sometimes that he raids the Goodwill dumpsters for his clothes..." Cordelia would have continued her fashion assessment of me but she finally picked up on the glares of everyone in the room and stopped speaking.

"Where is Xander anyway? He should be out of class by now." Jenny asked, looking at the Slayerettes at the table.

Willow answered again. "He should be here any minute now. What are we going to say to him when he come in, though? After what Buffy told us, he seems like a different person now."

"Don't worry, Will. The same Xander Harris will walk through that door and ask where we're going to eat, promise. He hasn't changed that much... though I have to tell you, he did look pretty hot that night in that dark blue shirt and those tight black jeans." Buffy leaned back in her chair and smiled sweetly at Cordelia, who gave her a confused look while everyone else looked at Buffy curiously.

I grinned at that, turned away from the door and started walking toward the hall door that lead outside to the front of the school. For some reason, I did not want to walk into the library right now

and face them after they heard about Buffy's and my adventures. Maybe later, when the facts of the story did not seem so amazing. But for now, I just wanted to go home, get something to eat, and maybe practice on my guitar a little.

As I walked through the front door of Sunnydale High School, feeling that I could handle anything the Hellmouth could throw at me, I began to whistle an old Motown tune.

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Rescue me,

I want you in my arms.

Rescue me,

I need your tender charms,

'cause I'm lonely and I'm blue.

I need you

and your love too.

Come on and rescue me.

Come on baby and rescue me...

\_\*\*\_ \_\*\*

end rescue me chapter six

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End  
file.